



## **SCAMMON'S LAGOON WHALE WATCHING TOUR**

**Thursday – Sunday, February 22-25, 2007**

**Cost: \$995.00**

**WELCOME!** Thank you for your interest in what has been truly an “adventure of a lifetime” for our small groups of Baja Adventurers over the past decade. We pride ourselves on leading safe, enjoyable and personable whale watching trips to Baja California. We are committed to a small group and friendly atmosphere. Eight people plus two leaders travel together in one 15-passenger Ford Van (maximum two vans-16 people total). The information that follows will give you a clear picture of the type of adventure you can expect. We hope you will join us.

**ABOUT THIS TRIP:** Yes, it's about whale watching—but much more than that. You will have the opportunity to log upwards of twelve hours of close encounters with gray whales. No other whale watching tour provides this much time on the water in such a short trip. You will also have the chance to tour the largest salt-works in the world and/or participate in some excellent bird watching. Lastly, there will be time to relax, explore the town and eat some delicious fresh caught seafood and local Mexican cuisine.

Laguna Ojo de Liebre (Scammon's Lagoon) is located approximately 500 miles down the Baja California Peninsula. We will be visiting the winter home of the California Gray Whales. Observing newborn calves interacting with their mothers, and hopefully with our boat, is a special privilege. These huge mammals will be exhibiting all kinds of classic behaviors: spy hopping, breaching, sounding and possibly mating in the warm waters of the lagoon. We will enjoy about nine hours of up close and personal whale watching over the course of the weekend—going out on three separate excursions.

The van ride will take all day; however, the scenery is dramatic and it is a wonderful way to become acquainted with a unique and special landscape as well as your fellow group members! The overwhelming majority of our post trip evaluations, over the years, have told us not to charter a large bus as it takes away from the friendly small group atmosphere. We will make stops for meals and rest breaks along the way and do our best to share information about each small town's history and the local flora. Maintaining a flexible and positive outlook on things is crucial when traveling in Baja California. The road conditions vary dramatically and delays are possible.

**WEATHER:** Expect daytime temperatures in the 70's and evenings in the 50's and plan on windy conditions in the afternoon and at night. It is usually sunny during the day, but we could also have clouds and even rain. Please come prepared clothing-wise. In our many years of leading this trip, **we have rarely had to cancel a day on the water because of unsafe high winds and choppy seas—but please be aware that this is a possibility.**

**FOOD** As part of the cost, we have planned for three buffet breakfasts (Friday, Saturday & Sunday) one group BBQ on Friday evening and a farewell fiesta dinner on Saturday night. In addition, two box lunches and additional snacks will be served while whale watching as part of the cost. Your trip leaders will provide coffee and Mexican pastries on the two early morning drives. The remainder of the meals will be at your expense (lunch & dinner Thursday). The restaurants that we visit are all very clean and serve delicious but inexpensive food—we expect that you will be pleasantly surprised.

**INCLUDED IN THE PRICE:** The fee of \$995.00, includes professional tour leaders, Mexican Tourist Visa, personal travel insurance, three nights' lodging (based on double occupancy), round trip transportation via air conditioned 15-passenger van, four guided whale watching excursions totaling twelve hours, tours of the salt works and surrounding area, two continental breakfasts, three buffet breakfasts, two box lunches and two Fiesta/BBQ dinners. Single supplement is available for \$150.00 additional.

**NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE:** Your personal expenses will include two meals on Thursday (lunch & dinner), as well as tips for the local guides, waiters and maids.

**CANCELLATION POLICY: PLEASE READ BEFORE REGISTERING FOR AN OUTING**

*1. If you cancel from this outing twenty (20) working days (M-F) prior to the pre-trip meeting, you are entitled to a refund less a twenty-five percent (25%) handling fee or a credit voucher good for the full amount which can be used toward another outing. Credit vouchers are valid through the end of the academic year. Note: transferring from one trip to another constitutes a cancellation and must be done within the aforementioned deadline to avoid loss of fee.*

*2. If you must cancel from an outing after the aforementioned deadline (above), you may receive a refund (less a 25% handling fee) or a credit voucher good for the full amount **ONLY IF WE CAN FILL YOUR VACATED SPOT**. Please note that all other spaces must be filled before we can fill your space. If we are unable to fill your vacated spot, you will not be entitled to a credit voucher or refund. **NO EXCEPTIONS**.*

*3. Sometimes, we must cancel an outing due to low enrollment. In such a situation, we try to contact enrolled participants either by the Monday prior to the outing or the day of the pre-trip meeting. Enrolled participants will be eligible for a full refund or credit voucher.*

*4. In the event of cancellation due to unforeseeable circumstances on the part of Aztec Adventures or County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (bad weather, natural disaster, or instructor illness for example), we will make every attempt to reschedule the outing or issue a full refund or credit voucher.*

**LODGING:** Please keep in mind that Guerrero Negro is a very small town with a population of 7,900 people. The Salt Works and Fishing comprise the majority of the economy. Tourism only comes during whale watching season. We are **not** going to a five star hotel or a major tourist destination. In other words, Guerrero Negro is not Cabo San Lucas. However, our motel will have clean, pleasant double rooms, televisions, hot showers and a bathroom. Again, please do not expect the same standards that we place on U.S. motels for service and cleanliness. Pillows, towels, and washcloths can leave something to be desired. We encourage you to bring your own if this will enhance your comfort.

**YOUR TRIP LEADERS:** Your trip leaders are experienced Baja Travelers and Adventure Leaders. They lead all kinds of outdoor adventure experiences in Baja California. As a result, they have an intimate knowledge of the land, the people, and the whales. In addition, while they don't have magic powers with the whales, they will do their best to call them close to your boat!

**OUR EXPECTATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION:** This trip is designed for people who are self-motivated and want to make the most of their Whale Watching Adventure. Traveling in Baja California can be challenging at times due to the lack of infrastructure. We expect everyone to contribute positively to the small group atmosphere by being considerate, friendly, and highly flexible and maintaining a good sense of humor. Everyone must be efficient and on time. Since we are traveling together, one person's lateness will impact the rest of the group. If several people are late, we may not be able to do everything that we have planned. Lastly, the term "Ugly American" comes to mind. Too often U.S. Citizens traveling south of the border treat Mexicans with less courtesy and respect than they deserve. Part of the value of a trip like this one is that it gives you the opportunity to observe another way of life and to recognize the value and goodness to be found everywhere. **NO DRUGS!** Don't even think about doing drugs--the penalty for possession of illegal drugs in Mexico is severe. Drinking is also prohibited in the vans and during our daily activities. However, a beer or margarita with dinner is ok. It has been our experience that people who drink too much become inflexible as well as a danger to others on the trip. Come on the trip to enjoy the sights of Baja, the whales, and the people. Thanks!

**HEALTH/PHYSICAL CONDITIONING:** This trip is strenuous in the sense that we will have two long days traveling by van. The whale watching boats (pangas) are small, 19-25' long and driven by 75-150hp outboard motor. You will be required to climb into the boats. Everyone will be required to wear a Personal Flotation Device (life jacket) at all times on the water and follow the explicit safety instructions of the guides.

You should definitely be comfortable in open water that can be choppy at times. Lastly, from our many years of experience we have found that some people must aggressively regulate their liquid intake so as not to become uncomfortable out on the water. Going three plus hours without a bathroom can be difficult to say the least.

**RISKS/HAZARDS/SAFETY:** We will be literally a full day's drive from advanced medical facilities and safety must be of primary importance. We expect everyone to accept the responsibility of keeping oneself and the group free of injury. In the event of an injury that would require advanced medical treatment, we will more than likely need everyone's assistance and therefore need to cut the trip short.

**GRATUITIES & TIPS:** Please, when eating out, tip the same amount as you would your waiter in the States. Your meals will certainly be less expensive and the service will be the same or better. Leave a few dollars for your motel maids as well. In addition, please budget a minimum of \$5-\$10 tip per whale watching excursion for our whale watching guides. Our guides do an incredible job and since their jobs are only seasonal, they will surely appreciate the additional income.

**STEWARDSHIP:** It is important to the Aztec Adventures Outdoor Program to give something back to the places and communities from which we derive so much enjoyment and knowledge. Whenever we visit small communities in Baja California we strive to bring with us used clothes of any kind, but especially children's clothing. Many of our local Mexican friends struggle economically and a generous donation of clothing is always appreciated. We encourage you to go through your closet for items you no longer wear or use and bring them on the trip.

## **ITINERARY**

### **PRE-TRIP MEETING:**

A required pre-trip meeting will be held **Thursday, February 16, 2007 at 7:00pm** at a County of San Diego Department of Parks & Recreation facility TBD.

#### **Thursday, Feb. 22**

Meet in Parking Lot V on 55<sup>th</sup> Street (SDSU Campus). Depart from SDSU at 6:00am SHARP! Travel all day, making stops in Tijuana, Ensenada, San Quintin, and Catavina for meals, toilets, and gas. We will have a continental breakfast in Ensenada (pastries and coffee) and stop for a brunch in San Quintin. Arrive in Guerrero Negro approximately 6:00PM. Check into our motel. Dinner with group at motel restaurant.

#### **Friday, Feb. 23**

Meet at vans at 7:00am. Breakfast at Mario's. Depart in tour bus for Whale Watching at 9:00am. On water approximately 9:45am and return to shore after three hours. Enjoy a quick snack and travel to Ojo de Liebre Natural Park for afternoon of whale watching (2 hours). Complimentary barbeque dinner at Mario's in evening.

#### **Saturday, Feb. 24**

Meet at vans at 7:00am. Breakfast at Mario's. Depart in tour bus for whale watching at 9:00am. On water at approximately 9:45am– return to shore after 3 hours. Enjoy a quick snack and tour the Saltworks. Farewell dinner with group at motel restaurant.

#### **Sunday, Feb. 25**

Meet at 5:00am, load up the van, and depart at 5:30am SHARP! Travel all day making stops in Catavina (Continental Breakfast: pastries & coffee), El Rosario (Brunch), San Telmo, and Ensenada. Be back at SDSU in time for supper – depending on the border crossing!

## INDIVIDUAL EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING LIST:

Everyone should attempt to limit his or her luggage. Guerrero Negro is a small dusty town. You won't need any "Sunday fancy go to meetin' clothes". Dress for the weather and definitely make sure you bring everything that's on the equipment & clothing list.

**PASSPORT \*\*\*** A notarized copy of a birth certificate and photo I.D. usually works—but often meets with some hassles.

- ❑ Two (2) 1-LITER BOTTLES OF DRINKING WATER (minimum)\*\*\* we will have plenty of purified drinking water available throughout the trip.
- ❑ SNACK FOODS \*\*\* we will be bringing coffee and Danish pastries for the early morning drives—thus stopping for a late breakfast—early lunch.
- ❑ MONEY/SMALL BILLS - \$1's, \$5's, & \$10's are best. \$20's are okay. \$50's are a hassle. Also, the hard working whale watching guides of Guerrero Negro greatly appreciate the tips. \*\*\*
- ❑ TENNIS SHOES or COMFORTABLE WALKING SHOES
- ❑ WATER SHOES/SPORT SANDALS – we may need to roll up our pants and get our feet wet at Ojo de Liebre Natural Park when boarding the pangas.
- ❑ LONG PANTS & SHORTS
- ❑ T-SHIRTS
- ❑ LONG SLEEVED SHIRT
- ❑ SHADE HAT – baseball or Indiana Jones styles are perfect.
- ❑ SWEATSHIRT, SWEATER, or POLAR FLEECE JACKET\*\*\*
- ❑ RAINCOAT &/OR WINDBREAKER W/HOOD
- ❑ PERSONAL TOILETRIES (INCLUDING TOILET PAPER)
- ❑ SUNGLASSES\*\*\* (polarized lenses allow you to see beneath the water's surface better)
- ❑ SUNSCREEN
- ❑ CAMERA AND FILM! (LOTS OF FILM) AND/OR VIDEO CAMERA WITH EXTRA BATTERIES\*\*\*
- ❑ FANNY PACK/DAYPACK – for carrying your essentials in the van & while whale watching. \*\*\*
- ❑ DUFFLE BAG, BACKPACK, or SUITCASE - for putting the above into.
- ❑ PILLOW\*\*\* and/or INFLATABLE NECK PILLOW—for the van ride.
- ❑ TOWEL/WASHCLOTH many past trip members have recommended bringing your own towel and washcloth because the ones issued by the motel are small and leave something to be desired.

Your luggage will be transported on top of the van and you will not have access to it once we depart for our destination. Therefore, please pack the "\*\*\*\*" items to keep with you in the van.